

**Statement of Anniston, Ala., citizen Chris Waddle
to the Subcommittee on Military Installations and Facilities,
Committee on Armed Services,
U.S. House of Representatives
1 July 1999**

Thank you, Chairman Hefley and subcommittee members, for inviting our testimony. We represent the civilian grassroots support for all America's military installations.

To place us in your mind, Anniston and Calhoun County in Northeast Alabama are near Birmingham, near Atlanta and darn near perfect, as we like to say, by staying about an hour's drive from both big cities.

We're here today to determine how all the places like ours can stay perfect and bolster America's economic strength from what is often a semi-rural domain. The Anniston region spent 82 years working for the nation's military improvement. We nestle in the southern Appalachians. World War I artillerymen found ideal ranges in our green velvet hills that patiently swallowed up their gunnery shells without complaint.

When the war department moved to buy the acreage that was to become Fort McClellan, corn crops on the land had swollen the bid price by one-third. Citizens of Anniston patriotically paid the difference. We've shared the burden ever since.

Economic benefit consistently returned the community's investment. Don't get us wrong. We're not here as groan and moan types with our tin cup out because the gravy train left our station. When Yankee troops hobbled their horses on Civil War plantations, the cavalry was merely fertilizing our pastures. We know how we benefited. It's the devastation after withdrawal we seek to avoid.

The modern military economy represented an advantage to towns like ours for a long time. But there was often a price to pay as well.

Anniston Army Depot also sits in our county. The Depot refits tanks and also stores more than 7 percent of the nation's considerable stocks of deadly and leaking nerve agent, pending on-site incineration of the weapons stockpile. That activity – like the fort – is both economic benefit and sacrifice.

Would you like chemical-filled missile disposal in your backyard?

Our local economy's over-dependence on military spending – in hindsight – too narrowly defined our growth. We were lulled by patriotism into delay of diversification.

Yet entrepreneurship is what we do best. That's why we're here today to seek the direct conveyance of McClellan's garrison land for redevelopment. Give our community the land, to say it in plain language, and we'll be the kind of stewards who will repay the gift many times in added value to the economy. The same economic principle by extension should apply evenly for every community across the nation.

In our case industrialization surpassed agriculture to lead the local economy in the years after we had to pay farmers for their corn crops so the Army could occupy the fort.

Anniston was founded upon the heavy metals industry after the Blue Coats pulled out following the Civil War. The fertilizer then was the financial investment of a Northern general named Tyler. He met and liked a Southern businessman named Sam Noble, who had the industrial know-how. That merger of one man's means and the other man's knowledge lives on in our local culture.

The community wrote a strategic growth plan called EnVision 2010 as a consensus endeavor not long ago. First among the five strategies published by our Chamber of Commerce is industrial recruitment.

This is a region ready to move on up. Disposition of vacant Fort McClellan is key.

With the chair's permission I will extend my remarks in writing with documents.

Base Realignment and Closure rules over the years, Mr. Chairman, evolved in hodge-podge ways. As one of my supporting documents states, the Pentagon has made conveyance terms more convenient and lenient for urban than for semi-rural locations.

Totally out-of-the-way places benefit from zero cost conveyance, in the other extreme, because they have nothing to give anyway.

Near-perfect Anniston sits in the middle as always with 16,000 population too great to benefit from a Rural Economic Development Conveyance.

Now, we thought about asking those 16,000 to step over the county line for the next census. But it makes much more sense – and national policy fairness – for Congress to simplify BRAC rules by conveying former garrisons to all local governments, which have the economic incentive and willingness to earn a return on the federal investment.

We can generate far greater economic benefit to the U.S. Treasury by strategically putting the land into use than the Army ever could hope to receive in fee-simple transfer.

The military expended more money in the first few seconds of conflict in Kosovo at \$2 million per Cruise missile than the value of this BRAC property abandoned by the Army.

The moral reward of our Balkan effort was great. Yet the true return on our Congressman Riley's amendment for direct conveyance of BRAC properties potentially outstrips the importance of recent armed conflict.

Passage of the measure means greater wealth-building for the nation, Mr. Chairman. Direct conveyance also means doing the right thing in America, where our own communities patriotically supported military bases.

Our nation fights not just with guns and bullets but with her economy in the sum of all the local, industrial manifestations.

Places like Anniston and Calhoun County were there for the country in wartime.

Now the nation can best serve its own interest by conveying the economic means for us to wage peace.

Thank you Chairman Hefley, members of the Subcommittee on Military Installations and Facilities. And thank you Mr. Riley.

Attachments follow

Here is an Associated Press dispatch this week on Kosovo costs.

Kosovo conflict and aftermath costing billions

By TOM RAUM
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON —Waging war with \$2 million missiles can run up a quite a tab. So can preserving peace.

NATO's 78-day air campaign against Yugoslavia cost the United States as much as \$4 billion, according to private and congressional estimates.

Annual peacekeeping and reconstruction expenses are expected to run nearly as high—and that assumes the United States will honor President Clinton's pledge that "not a penny" will go to rebuild Serbia's roads and bridges while Yugoslavia President Slobodan Milosevic remains in power.

The U.S. military contributed to the NATO force more than 725 aircraft, a variety of artillery, multiple-launch rocket systems and about 5,500 supporting Army troops. Clinton called up about 5,000 reservists.

U.S. aircraft flew 2,300 missions in the 11 weeks of airstrikes. U.S. Navy ships fired about 450 Tomahawk cruise missiles, at a price of about \$1 million a missile. U.S. Air Force B-52 bombers launched 90 air-launched cruise missiles, which cost about \$2 million apiece.

The Pentagon has not put a price on these deployments or on replacing the munitions they consumed. An independent research organization has: \$2.3 billion to \$4 billion, according to the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments.

The costs are difficult to estimate because the Pentagon has not given details on how many munitions other than cruise missiles were used.

Further, the Pentagon plans to upgrade, rather than replace, some of the cruise missiles and other munitions while also increasing stockpiles, center analyst Elizabeth Heeter said.

In late May, President Clinton signed an emergency spending bill that set aside about \$5 billion for the airstrikes through Sept. 30, if necessary.

With the fighting over and warplanes headed home, the administration hopes to use as much of the remaining money as possible—about \$2 billion by some estimates—to pay for peacekeeping in Kosovo, a province of Yugoslavia's dominant republic Serbia.

Tending to the peace in Kosovo is expected to run \$2 billion to \$3.5 billion annually, not including reconstruction costs, the center says. The international force of 50,000 peacekeepers includes 7,000 U.S. troops to help resettle and protect ethnic Albanian refugees.

The White House chief of staff, John Podesta, said U.S. peacekeepers will be needed indefinitely.

Without waiting for the administration to request a U.S. share, the Senate Appropriations Committee voted to provide \$535 million for postwar Balkan reconstruction. Kosovo would receive \$150 million, but the rest of Serbia would get nothing.

Lawmakers want the United States to provide about 20 percent of total costs, said Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee on foreign operations and author of the reconstruction plan. The Senate could take up the measure this week.

The European Commission, administrative arm of the 15-nation European Union, has estimated the cost of rebuilding Kosovo at \$7 billion for the first three years. It plans to spend up to \$722 million on reconstruction during each of the next three years.

While no independent agency has assessed damage in Serbia, Yugoslav claims range as high as \$90 billion. Factories, railroads and bridges bore the brunt of NATO's airstrikes.

AP-CS-06-27-99 1205EDT

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Here are some observations on direct conveyance from Mr. Rob Richardson, formerly the executive director of our Fort McClellan Reuse and Redevelopment Authority:

Population

By law, any community not falling within a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) automatically qualifies for a zero cost conveyance. This is known as a Rural Economic Development Conveyance (EDC). Many communities around the country have taken advantage of this conveyance mechanism. The rationale behind it is fairly obvious: The military built bases in rural, out-of-the-way places for strategic reasons. This is problematic for Anniston because its county-wide population of 116,000 people (before base closure) exceeds the MSA 100,000 person threshold by only 16,000 people. The MSA cut-off is somewhat arbitrary and does not consider the qualitative factors that make the reuse of Fort McClellan so challenging. Anniston suffers the same “rural” challenges of any community that is not burdened with the MSA designation — poor location, low population, limited public resources — but cannot take advantage of the zero cost rural EDC. We missed by 16,000 people. The point is that we’re more like a rural community (Peru, Indiana or Oscoda, Michigan) than we are a thriving metropolis (Chicago, Memphis, and Denver).

The Exceptions Swallow the Rule

The fractured nature of the Pentagon, with multiple branches, commands, and individuals, has created a myriad of exceptions to the “purchase” requirement. Many urban communities have brilliantly negotiated zero cost conveyances of prime properties in prime locations. For example, Glenview Naval Air Station, just a few miles from downtown Chicago, is essentially a zero cost conveyance. The military acquiescence to these zero cost deals has eroded what was supposed to be a hard and fast rule. Where’s the equity when a town like Chicago can get property for free, but a town like Anniston can’t?

Qualitative Factors Should Govern

Basing the rural zero cost EDC on population alone does not consider the qualitative factors that make reuse of Fort McClellan so difficult. The arbitrary rule is only an exercise in mathematics, a quantitative analysis based on a body count. Fort McClellan is a school, not an industrial site. How does a community like Anniston reuse way too much dormitory space, classroom space, and administrative space in this era of ever shrinking public school budgets? There is obviously no or little demand because no public universities requested free space under the Public Benefit Conveyance rules governing the free disposition of federal property for public school uses. We had to creatively start our own school, the National Center for Domestic Preparedness, to reuse McClellan’s university-type space. Similarly, we have to give away property for free to the only private university that demonstrated any interest (Marion). Similarly, the pure quantitative analysis does not consider unique factors like the difficulty of reusing property in the shadow of a chemical laboratory, the CDTF. I assure you I lost deals to locate industry on Fort McClellan because of the existence of the CDTF (Dell Webb, the nation’s largest provider of senior communities was very interested when I pitched them in Phoenix, but ultimately walked away because of the CDTF and the incinerator).

Environmental Insurance Already Paid

This is the point that makes me angry. The citizens of Calhoun County already paid for Fort McClellan! The taxpayers paid for it. It belongs to the citizens of Calhoun County. Why would we double pay for the benefit of owning a white elephant? The government's position is ridiculous: "we will force the taxpayer to pay for national defense and the construction of a wasteful military infrastructure and then we may close the base in your hometown, but you have to pay for that too." Makes no sense.

Incinerator

Finally, it makes me just as mad that on one side of town the military wants us to be its partner building a potentially dangerous incinerator while on the other side of town they insist on a confrontational, arms-length negotiation for a military base. The Army wants to be friends only when it's convenient to the Army. I think we've given enough. "Don't ask for my help at the same time you're trying to hurt me."

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Here is the Anniston-area's vision statement derived from the community consensus project of the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce:

Economic Development

"The winds and the waves are always on the side of the ablest navigators" -Gibbon

Strong local leadership is a key component of economic community development. Communities with active leadership are more often successful in obtaining grants, improving community services, building industrial sites, and attracting new industries. Community leaders often have unique access to local economic and human resources, as well as the capacity to mobilize them for development. They devote substantial time and resources to attracting new businesses, to encourage local entrepreneurs, to helping neighborhoods become more self-sufficient and to improve the viability of our economy and the job opportunities available to our residents. This strong local leadership must exist at all community levels, from the Anniston City Council Government, to the CEOs of local enterprise, to all public and private agencies alike.

economies are characterized by many types of industries interlinked by mutual suppliers and consumers. It is important to understand that Anniston's economic region extends beyond the corporate limits of the city. While the surrounding urbanized areas share infrastructural, environmental and transportation concerns, the economic region is linked by common trade and commerce concerns. Anniston is the central city for the economic region, both geographically and functionally. As the central city, Anniston performs a higher order of functions within the region, such as the provision of goods and services, and serving as the major employment

center. While the population and commercial and residential uses are growing at a faster rate outside Anniston's corporate limits than within, Anniston continues to provide the support for these activities. For instance, Anniston has the highest concentration of higher order business support services, such as law, finance, banking, government, insurance and transportation. This functional specialization within the economic region must always be kept in mind when planning for Anniston's economic development.

When considering goals for local economic development, job creation within an increasingly resilient and diversified economy is of paramount importance. Public funds and efforts should target quality jobs in businesses acceptable to the local community. Diverse and developed

consumers. Such an economy will be more resilient, stable, and self-sufficient, thus being less vulnerable to national and regional economic fluctuations.

The five major strategies envisioned by the Economic Development Committee for achieving the goal of economic development within Anniston are industrial recruitment, increased local leadership, preparatory workplace programs, national community promotion and the promotion of Anniston as an ideal retirement community.

Curriculum vitae

Chris Waddle, 54, is appearing as a citizen before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Installations and Facilities.

- He is a past president of the Anniston, Ala., Committee of Unified Leadership, the co-founder of 100 citizens of Anniston and is a participant in Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce activities.
- In statewide organizations he is a board member of the Alabama Civil Justice Foundation and was graduated from Leadership Alabama. He has served as a member of the Citizens Commission on Reform of the Alabama Courts, as a delegate to the State Constitutional Reform Conference and as a participant in the Alabama Education Summit.
- The U.S. Army War College invited Waddle to its weeklong 42nd annual National Security Seminar for private citizens. He served in the Army for two years beginning in 1966.
- Born and reared through high school in Texas, he holds a BA from Birmingham-Southern College in Alabama and a master's degree from Columbia University in the City of New York. Waddle is married to Alabama native Sherrell Hardin Waddle, and they have two adult children.
- Waddle is employed as an executive editor and vice president for Consolidated Publishing, a holding company for newspapers and a corporate federal contractor at Fort McClellan, Ala. Waddle, however, appears before the subcommittee as individual citizen – not as a company representative – and so indicated on the appropriate U.S. House disclosure form.